

The Soundpost

Newsletter of the Pacific Northwest Viols – A chapter of the Viola da Gamba Society of America
On the web: WWW.PNVIOLS.ORG

The President's Message

Lee Inman

October. The month in which we turn our attention to colored leaves, chilly dampness and – ghoulies and goblins, and things that go bump in the practice room. So, perhaps I can use this forum to throw a little scare into.....the *pits of your souls* (Boo!). To start, let me rerun a little internal monologue I experienced during a recent practice session. [Dissolve to flashback]

“Oh, yes,” I said silently to myself. “This Abel Sonata is such a lovely piece, I always enjoy playing through it, and I.... Hm. It suddenly doesn't feel as comfortable to me as it always has [cue scary soundtrack]. Let me go back to measure 12, and try it.... Oh, dear. That jump to the low 'D' was frightful. I've never had this problem before. I'm sure it was just...a fluke. Yes, that must be it. [crescendo scary soundtrack]. Nothing to worry about here – I'll just play it again and go on. Wait! Yikes! Ack! That was horrible! Oh, the misery! [scary soundtrack is really annoyingly loud now] I've forgotten how to make a clean leap to low 'D'! Gaaaaaahhhhhh.”

You get the idea. Not quite a 'the call is coming from inside the house' scenario, but to a viol player, this is true horror. So, I ask: what happened?

I had simply forgotten, or overlooked, for a moment one or two of the little things I once learned to do to solve this technical problem: lower the arm, push the viol out a little, incline the heel of the hand closer to the floor. Yes, it was just a little thing or two, but it spoiled my otherwise flawless Abel sonata. It happens to all of us, forgetting these details – mostly, I think, because we too often find ourselves practicing or playing on auto-pilot. We forget to prepare a shift or string change properly. We don't notice when the bow isn't intersecting the string correctly. We use some fingering we didn't plan. We get distracted while tuning up, and don't finish the chore. We forget to monitor our posture with the instrument, and find ourselves with a backache a half-hour later. All really minor stuff, but it leads us – at best – to be discouraged with our own playing, or – at worst – to being invited to consort sessions less frequently.

The point I would like to make is that we really do have to pay attention to all these little things, and do so all the time. Slow practice is an immense help, of course. But so is listening critically to what we're doing. And not just listening, but maintaining a willingness to stop when something feels amiss, then to analyze the cause, and finally to apply the remedies we've been taught, or have at some earlier point figured out for ourselves. This paying of attention is part of the discipline of playing music, but also a necessary prerequisite to the joy we justifiably feel when everything goes exactly right.

In short: it's the little things that'll getcha, if you don't...

Watch! Out!



OK, that's sufficient fright for one newsletter.

On November 8th, we'll all be watching out for Craig Trompeter when he joins us at the next Play Day. Those of you who have experienced Craig's insights as a teacher, performer and Feldenkrais coach already know how enlightening an hour or two spent with him can be. Nothing scary there.

Finally: if you haven't already renewed your membership for the year, please do so. [cue scary soundtrack]

Play Day Schedule

- 9:30 am - Check in, sign up for consorts, tune
- 10:00 am - Grand Consort Presentation
- 11:30 am – Lunch Break
- 1:00 pm - First Consort Session
- 2:30 pm - Second Consort Session
- 4:00 pm - Clean up

\$20 Fee per participant
A = 415

November 8th Play Day Location Cathedral Place at St. James

803 Terry Avenue
Seattle, Washington

Parking available in O'Dea High School lot (free)
and in the lot

Parkade at Boren and Marion Streets (\$)

Craig Trompeter Leads the November 8th Play Day

Bio provided by Craig Trompeter



Craig Trompeter has been a musical presence in Chicago for nearly twenty years. He performs in concert and over the airwaves with the Haymarket Opera Company, Second City Musick, Music of the Baroque, Chicago Opera Theater, the Cal Players, the Oberlin Consort of Viols, and the Smithsonian Chamber Music Society. He has appeared at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Glimmerglass Festival, and the Brooklyn Academy of Music. As soloist he has performed at the Ravinia Festival, at the annual conference of the American Bach Society, and with the Chicago Symphony and Music of the Baroque. Trompeter has recorded discs of Mozart, Biber, Boismortier, Marais, Handel, Maurice Greene, Henry Eccles, and a potpourri of Elizabethan composers on the Harmonia Mundi, Cedille, and Centaur labels. As a modern cellist, Trompeter was a founding member of the Fry Street String

Quartet. He premiered several chamber operas by MacArthur Fellow John Eaton, performing as actor, singer and cellist. A passionate educator, Trompeter has taught master classes at his *alma mater*, the Cleveland Institute of Music, the Oberlin Conservatory, Grinnell College, and the Chicago Musical College. In 2003 he founded the *Feldenkrais*® Center of Chicago where he teaches *Awareness Through Movement*® and *Functional Integration*®. Craig has given *Feldenkrais* workshops throughout the nation in universities, music conservatories, and dance studios. He is the General Director of the Haymarket Opera Company: www.haymarketopera.org

PNV Instruments Move House: Many Thanks to Gretchen Anex & Peter Stewart

Lee Inman & Olga Hauptman

We would like to express our deep gratitude to Gretchen Anex who, for many years, has been the diligent custodian of our rental instrument 'library'.* **Thank you very much, Gretchen.** Thank you for storing our instruments and for making yourself available when Olga, our instrument rental coordinator, came over for instruments. She often met renters at Gretchen's home, and Gretchen usually came down to share rosin, or the tuner, or maybe an extra string... When offering renters a choice of instruments, Gretchen would help demonstrate the basses and tenors.

Gretchen has asked to be relieved of this responsibility, and we are pleased to announce that Peter Stewart has volunteered to take the viols back into his home. **Thank you, Peter** – we very much appreciate your generous offer.

*Pacific Northwest Viols has an inventory of seven basses - including one 7-string, three tenors, and one treble.

Reflecting on Outreach Performances

Chris Briden

Hello, my name is Chris Briden and I am the Outreach Coordinator for the Pacific Northwest Viols board. One of my duties in this position is to coordinate performances at retirement or senior homes in the Seattle area. Last year was my first acting in this capacity and, because of time constraints, I elected to do a number of these performances myself as solo performances.

I have to say here that I was very nervous about all this. For one, performing without an accompaniment, alone in front of a group of people, is always nerve wracking. In addition, I did not know what to expect when it came to my audience. I wondered, among many other things, if these people really even wanted me to come and play my strange instrument for them. I just had no idea what to expect.

What actually happened was, quite literally, life changing. I had always felt a little guilty about devoting myself to music, especially something so high-brow as the viola da gamba, because performances really only ever reach a very small segment of the social spectrum. I had always wondered how I could use all of the time and effort I put into this instrument to help others and not just those who can afford tickets.

Well, this experience answered those questions. Each performance was unique and rewarding in its own way. At one community I discovered after I performed that there were a few retired professional musicians and one very accomplished composer in the audience, each whom had so much to teach me that I stayed for almost the entire evening talking with them. At another, some of the residents felt so emotionally moved by live music that they felt compelled to sing along with my playing, which took some getting used to but it worked out well in the end.

The most meaningful of the performances was also the one that I had initially felt most apprehensive about. This performance was for dementia patients, for whom I had never had any experience. Most of these residents were nonresponsive and the others were clearly confused about where they were or why. I must admit that I found it hard to maintain my decorum as I introduced myself, my instrument and the PNV. But when I started playing, everything changed. (I'm getting all misty just recalling the experience.) Almost immediately, the confused ramblings and mutterings stopped and everyone focused on what I was playing. Several of the otherwise nonresponsive patients began to move along with the music, nodding their heads, tapping their feet or clapping along. One woman, who did not so much as blink during the time I had been in the room with her began to sing along with me, perfectly in tune, in rhythm and in the crystal clear soprano voice of a young girl. This was one of those few and cherished moments when music that I thought I knew suddenly became so much more. When I finished playing and began to pack up my viol, I began talking to an administrator who told me that the otherwise vegetative patients only ever respond to live music.

To say that something is "rewarding" has become so common today but this was truly a rewarding experience and I look forward to doing it again as often as I am able. Nearly all of my practice time is now spent on music that I think my new friends at the senior community might like rather than what I like playing or pandering to my own moodiness. These performances are no longer a duty but a privilege.



If you would like to come and join me in a performance, please contact me at chrisbriden@gmail.com or find me on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/SevenStringsofFury>.

LIBRARY NEWS

Olga Hauptman

PNV Board Member, **Michael King**, gets our special thanks for the job he has assumed of renovating our library. He has purchased boxes, labels and mending tape, and is cataloguing the entire collection. He has repaired bindings and searched for and found missing parts. So far he has finished sorting, repairing, and indexing the four boxes of music you see at our play days, which is all the works for three or more players. He is currently doing the same for all the music we have for soloists and duos, and that's another four boxes to get through! **Thank you, Michael!**

Michael has included in the library the lovely set of gig books put together by Board Member, **Jon Brenner**. It is a collection of pieces for various sizes of consorts, chosen by Jon to facilitate the formation and coordination of groups to play the outreach concerts that St James requires of us. In addition to editing and printing the books, Jon has posted them in Dropbox (<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/1zi3eom7p0wm4s8/TExvrB0X2f>)! **Thank you, Jon!**

The entire library will be available to all our members when we have a check-out system in place. It is stored at St. James, so such business will have to be taken care of on Play Days.

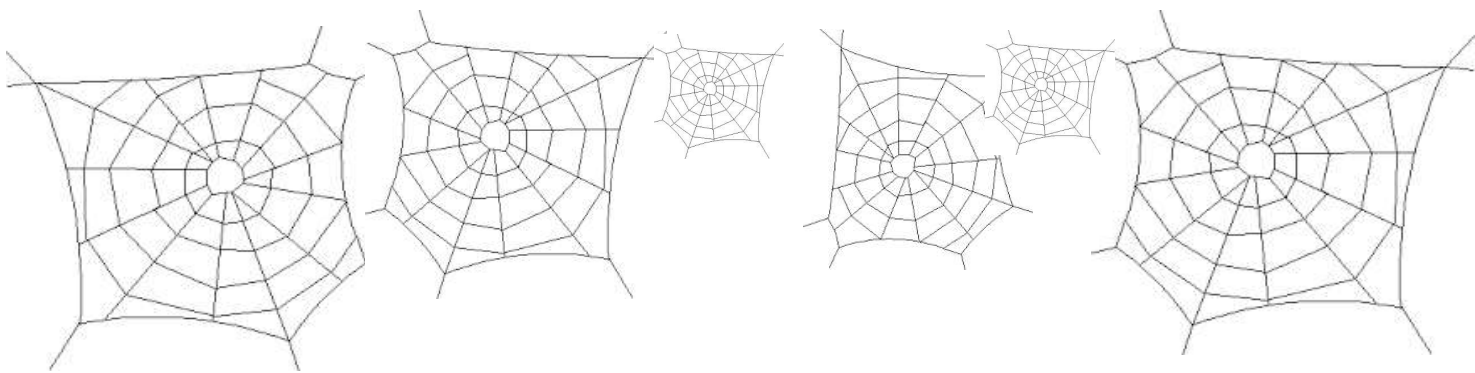
The Holiday Performance at the University Bookstore: You are invited: RSVP!

Noreen Jacky

On December 16 at the University bookstore a contingent of the Pacific Northwest Viols will be performing between 7PM and 8PM. There will be one rehearsal at my house (Ballard neighborhood) the week before. Time is not set yet.

Thank you to those who have offered to play for this year's bookstore performance. We already have several bass viol players, two recorder players and at least one tenor player. So tenor and treble players are still most welcome to join in! Bass players who want to be included can form a second group. Contact me, Noreen Jacky, if you want to join in.

As it is very hard to get people together in December, we will rehearse the pieces that include everyone in one rehearsal. Those who play solos or duets will rehearse on their own and let me know the timing of their piece. Let me know, for example, "I will take five minutes for playing a duet with Joe," and I can fit it into the program. I am assuming that no one will be offering a thirty-minute sonata! :-)) Also, It should be something holiday or winter themed.



Miscellaneous Bits

Tenor Viol Wanted

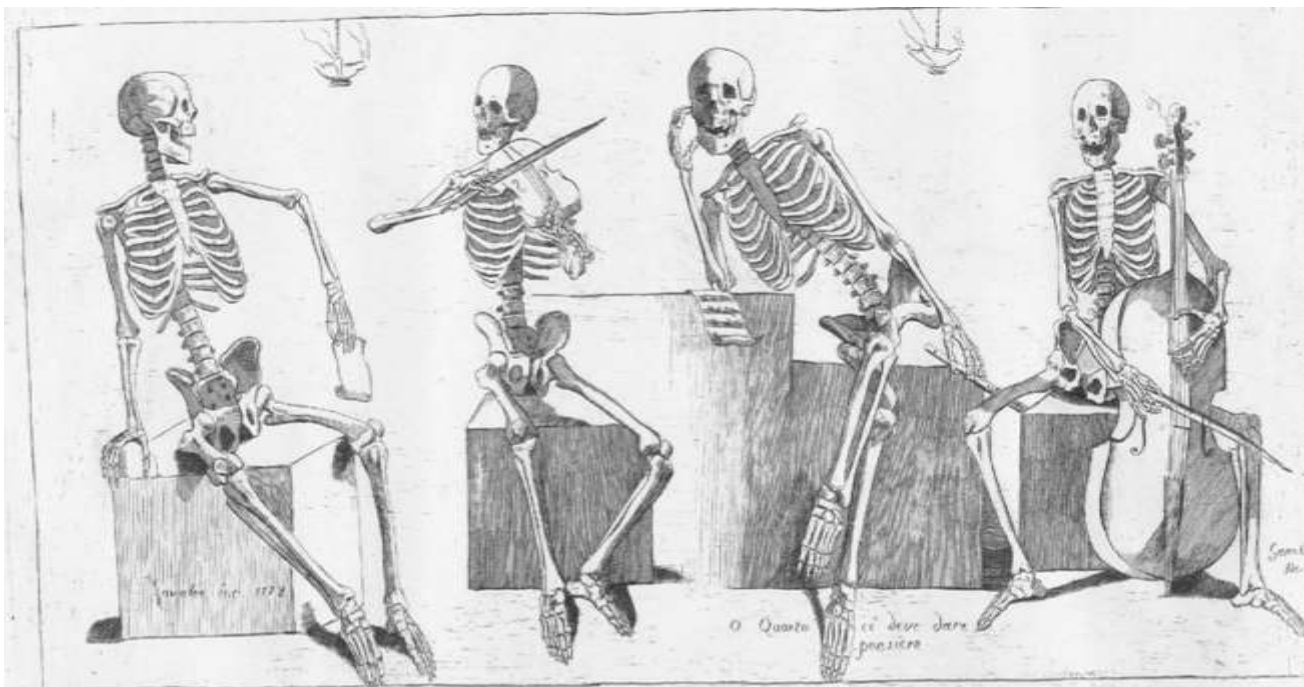
We're looking for a tenor viol to buy, probably in the \$1500-3000 price range, for a middle-school student. Please contact us at joanald.roberts@gmail.com

Member Contact List

Our PNV Members' Contact List will be mailed on October 25th. If you are a member and have not received your copy by November 1st, please contact Liisa Peterson, liisapeterson@gmail.com.

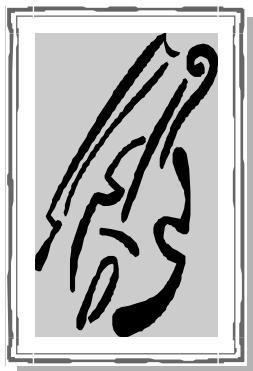


Tim Scott, at our September Play Day, leading us in using mental images to improve our playing.



Pacific Northwest Viols
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Bainbridge Island WA 98110

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



Pacific Northwest Viols 2014-2015 Season

PNV Play Day Dates

- ❖ *September 20, 2013 - Tim Scott*
- ❖ **November 8, 2013 - Craig Trompeter**
- ❖ January 24, 2014- Lee Inman
- ❖ March 14, 2015 – Ros Morley
- ❖ May 9, 2015 – Margriet Tindemans

*\$20 Fee per participant
A = 415*

***Play Day location for Sept. 20th is at our usual venue:
Cathedral Place at St. James
803 Terry Ave
Seattle, Washington***

Pacific Northwest Viols, Board Members 2014 – 2015

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|--------------------------------------|--|
| ❖ Lee Inman, President | ❖ Chris Briden, Outreach |
| ❖ Jon Brenner, Secretary, Programs | ❖ Michael King, Member at Large |
| ❖ Bill Warren, St. James Coordinator | ❖ Vicki Hoffman, Programs |
| ❖ Michael LaGaly, Treasurer | ❖ Olga Hauptman, Instrument Rental & Membership Roster Custodian |
| ❖ Lee Talner, Outreach | ❖ Liisa Peterson, Communications |
| ❖ Janet Slack, Member at Large | |

Find Pacific Northwest Viols on the web: www.pnviols.org and on Facebook

The **Soundpost** welcomes reader contributions of any kind: articles, commentary, personal stories, event reportage. E-Mail is preferred, but postal mail or napkin scribbblings are all gladly received, as well.
Email: liisapeterson@gmail.com.